



# Asset Management

## Piecing the Puzzle Together

Until this past year, the economy as a standalone concept was not among the yardsticks Caltrans used to measure the potential benefits of a project.

But as Caltrans moves toward a data-driven Asset Management Plan, it is. Caltrans intends to measure in advance whether a project will contribute toward sustainability, livability and the economy, and whether it will promote safety and health, and how much it will improve system condition and performance.

In its initial pilot for the Asset Management Plan, proposed projects will be scored using criteria designed to measure the total benefits of a project that move Caltrans toward the goals of its recently adopted Strategic Management Plan while remaining committed to its fix-it-first approach to maintaining the state's transportation infrastructure.

All of these project benefits, when added up, allow Caltrans to rank each project by how well it helps the department meet all of its goals. This is important since each project is competing for finite funding. Naturally, if there's a safety issue, that will be taken care of, but if the project can also meet health, sustainability and efficiency goals, for example, then it rises in the pecking order.

As Caltrans moves toward full implementation of the Asset Management Plan by 2020, this scoring system will allow the department to better evaluate transportation investments. For example, the average motorist might see roadside rest areas as merely a convenient restroom on long stretches of highway and a place to stretch your legs away from traffic. But they serve as a safe place as well for tired truckers to get off the road and catch up on their sleep. And if a renovation of an old rest area can also make them more compliant to the Americans with Disabilities Act and perhaps add solar-power charging stations for electric vehicles, it adds more services for the public while helping to make our highways safer for everyone.

This new prioritization approach requires State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) funding to be allocated in a way that supports the multiple-objective project model. This sounds like a simple enough change, however, legacy program definitions and software limitations make this more of a challenge. If implementation goes as planned, and is fine-tuned based on results of the pilot, every plan, every activity will bring Caltrans closer to fulfilling its mission.

For more on the expected benefits of the Asset Management plan, visit the [2015 Fourth Quarter Issue](#).

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*Doyle Drive has been re-envisioned as the Presidio Parkway. It improves access to the Presidio of San Francisco, and includes the unique features of a parkway, rather than a freeway.*